REMARKS

Claims 7-12 are pending in the application. Claims 1-6 have been previously cancelled. Claim 7 has been amended for form but not substance, and now recites

-        <u>always initializing a dialog step with a shortened prompt,</u>

-        waiting for a response by a system user, and

        - if a correct response is detected, proceeding to the next dialog step,

        - if an incorrect response is detected, outputting a detailed prompt, and

        - if no response is detected, outputting a detailed prompt.

This way, a user is always initially provided with a shortened prompt, and upon providing a correct response is always met with a shortened prompt in the next dialog step. This is a highly efficient dialog system. An experienced user providing an inappropriate response only receives one detailed prompt and then upon providing a correct answer is met with another shortened prompt. Only an inexperienced user receives detailed prompts, but even an inexperienced user may benefit from being provided with shortened prompts initially, as most users will have some experience with some parts of some dialog systems.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 7-12 have been rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Surace et al. (US 6,144,938) (hereinafter Surace) in view of McAllister (US 7,260,187).

Claim 7 has alternatively been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Surace in view of Comerford et al. (US 7,024,363).

Applicants respectfully traverse. These references do not provide a dialog system with which a shortened prompt is always provided as a first dialog step.

Turning first to Surace, Fig. 18 of Surace shows a time-out handler state 1880 for time-out situations (e.g., a user has not provided a response within a predetermined period of time) (see col. 22, lines 57-58). However, Surace does not appear to disclose how the time-out situations should be handled. The Examiner in fact acknowledges that this reference "does not

specifically teach always initializing a dialog step with a shortened prompt". For this, the Examiner cites McAllister.

McAllister discusses state of the art voice response units (VRUs) in col. 1, lines 44-67, and discloses that such systems may tailor scripts and messaging to a specific user and (a) allow the user to select the types of messages used or (b) automatically attempt to select one of several available scripts appropriate to a particular user based on identification provided by the user, or (c) "Alternatively, the system may automatically select an appropriate level of detail based on the user response time or the number of erroneous or incomplete responses received from the caller to prior prompts."

It can first be pointed out that, since the dialog system is adapting to a user, once the system identifies a user as inexperienced, it will switch to always providing detailed prompts (or at least until a sufficient number of correct responses have been made so that the system switches back to shortened prompts). Accordingly, this prior art dialog system is not a dialog system in which each dialog step always begins with a shortened prompt.

Second, since the system is adapting based on user response time or the number of erroneous or incomplete responses received from the caller to prior prompts, it is clear that the system keeps a record of responses and classifies a user over time. Accordingly, this prior art dialog system is not a dialog system in which each dialog step always begins with a shortened prompt.

Third, as these situations are "prior art", the system will not operate on the initial assumption that the user is an experienced user. Thus, it will not operate on the premise that a shortened prompt must be given to the user in every dialog step.

These differences, while they may not seem important, are very important when considering a human/machine interface. It is easy for a machine to be perceived by a human as primitive, clumsy, time wasting. The present invention provides a highly efficient dialog system, and is based on the premise that every dialog step should begin with a shortened prompt.

Thus, the present invention is not obvious over the combination of Surace and McAllister.

5

Turning now to the rejection based on the combination of Surace and Comerford, the Examiner again acknowledges that this reference "does not specifically teach always initializing a dialog step with a shortened prompt".

Comerford is cited for teaching a system that begins with a shorter prompt and once it is discovered that the user is having difficulties, the system will then give more complete prompts, to help support the illusion of understanding and cooperation.

Applicants respectfully traverse.

On reading Comerford in greater detail it can be seen that the dialog manager keeps track of user past performance, and if the user appears to have experience, then the dialog manager may provide less detail. Thus, the dialog does not begin with a simplified prompt, but merely arrives at the point of providing simplified dialog after a number of experiences with the user. This system is not as efficient as the present system with begins with the assumption that the user is experienced, and begins each dialog step with a simplified prompt.

Comerford further teaches that if a user requests help the dialog manager may reply with more complete prompts and guided activity. However, (a) the simplified prompting is only arrived at after the system determines that the user is experienced, not ab initio, and (b) the change from simplified prompt to complete prompt is not initiated after a single incorrect answer or no response or request for help, but only after several inappropriate responses.

Clearly, in Comerford a prompt is chosen either based on a user's experience score or based on repeated utterances of the user. It is noted that in the example as described in Comerford, a short prompt like "Say the name of the application" is only chosen when the user utters "Help," not always chosen. Therefore, Comerford does not disclose <u>always</u> initiating a dialog with a shortened prompt independent of a user's expertise.

Claim 7 is, therefore, believed to be patentable over the combination of Surace and Comerford. Since all the dependent claims are ultimately dependent on claim 7, they are believed to be patentable as well.
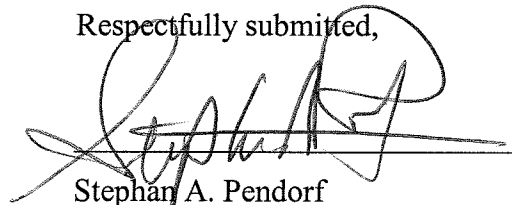
Favorable consideration and early issuance of the Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested. **Should further issues remain prior to allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the indicated telephone number.**

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any fees which may be required at any time during the prosecution of this application without specific authorization, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 16-0877.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephan A. Pendorf
Registration No. 32,665

Patent Central LLC
1401 Hollywood Blvd.
Hollywood, FL 33020-5237
(954) 922-7315

Date: **May 21, 2008**